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The Groundsheet

The Publication of
The Royal Westminster Regiment Association

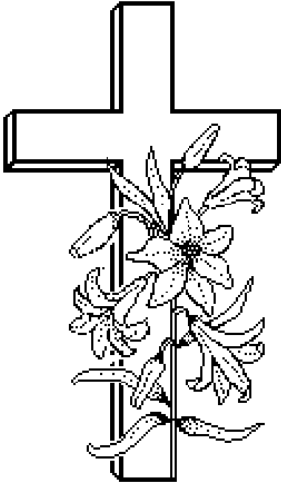
*'Dedicated to the ideals and comradeship
we knew in wars and peace in our
services both home and abroad.'*
'Pro Rege et Patria'

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In Memoriam



Lest We Forget

Brigadier-General (Ret.) Keith Corbould, 12 July 2019

Health and Welfare

Please advise the President of deaths, births, and other significant updates regarding the health and welfare of our members. We are aware of the significant number of marriages of members of the regiment, and despite lacking all the details we wish to congratulate all of the happy couples!

MIA/AWOL

How are your mates doing? Send up the count. Haven't heard from someone in awhile? Use this space to check in.

Are Your Dues Up To Date?

The Royal Westminster Regiment Association depends on your dues and donations. Yearly dues are \$20 and a Life Membership is only \$200. This gives you voting rights, this fine publication, and a snazzy beret.

How about a donation? You can identify where you want the donation to go: The Future Fund, Cadets, Health & Welfare, or whatever you feel is worthwhile. Whatever you support, it is appreciated. Send in your dues today. Thanks.

Your Executive

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Editor's Corner

Once again your humble editor and scribe is at the helm of this broadsheet. I would like to think this is matter of confidence in my burgeoning journalism skills, but the reality is that it was by default yet again. As such, I once again make the appeal for someone, anyone, to relieve this junior officer of this role. It's just one night a week, one weekend a month, I promise. Dear reader, you likely fell for that line once already, so step on up! I can even produce a hamburger IMP, and a beer for the lucky volunteer. Applications to the undersigned.

In addition to this appeal for my replacement, I need to encourage all members of the regiment, association, and regimental family to provide submissions. This edition has an excellent selection from the regimental family; we have a narrative of Captain Beglaw's experience on deployment in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, Hon.LCol. Strahl's excellent write up on the Melfa pilgrimage, an essay from one of our cadets, and more, but we need more content to fill the pages of the April Edition. I'm happy to print your experiences, stories, tall tales, and perhaps even mildly off colour jokes. My email address is next to this column. In the absence of submissions I may have to start combing through the regimental archives for embarrassing photographs or other blackmail material featuring my readers but I'm sure we would all prefer if the Groundsheet didn't become a supermarket tabloid. (However, please do send your Elvis sightings and blackmail material to me as well, just in case).

This 2019 year end edition marks the 156th year of service by the regiment and its predecessors. I was glad to meet former members at the Levee and wish all of the members of the regimental family and happy and prosperous 2020!

- 2Lt. Mulder

President's Report

NEW WESTMINSTER - I have taken on the task of being the president of your Association once again. I would like to thank Dennis Keeton and his executive who have done an excellent job of keeping the Association on an even keel. The job at hand is to ask for more volunteers to spread the workload. We are looking for someone who would be able to take over running our website and keeping it up to date. We are still looking for a secretary, but may have one by the time this message is published. I am pleased that I have people on the executive that are willing to do the tasks required.

The Vice President, Rob Harley, is going full speed on next year's Melfa Dinner. Getting more people to attend is a priority to make it successful; there will be a few changes that we are working on based on some of the feedback that we have received. Please mark the date (May 23rd) on your calendar and plan to attend.

There will be more information in the next edition of the Groundsheet. The groundsheet is another area that has to be upgraded, and I am confident that Hans Mulder will be up to the task. I look forward to serving the Association again in the coming year

- Your President

Museum

NEW WESTMINSTER - 3 new displays have been put on the top floor of the Armoury. An estimate has been done for new cases and to modernize the Museum Room, it comes to approximately \$3000.00 per foot, totaling more than one hundred and sixty thousand dollars.

Remembering the Westminsters

ITALY - It was 75 years ago that some of the Second World War's most famous battles were fought in Europe. Canadians are frequently reminded, as they should be, about Canada's significant and costly role at places like Juno Beach, as we were again during the commemoration events around the 75th anniversary of the D-Day landings. There will be pilgrimages throughout 2019 by the government and veterans' groups keen to fulfill the promise that "we will remember them."

But while the great victory in Normandy occupies most of the news media attention and popular imagination, there was another front where Canadians fought hard, risked everything, sacrificed many comrades – but ultimately won. And it was in this same spirit that The Royal Westminster Regiment Association recently arranged a 75th-anniversary commemorative tour of Italy. Many of the major battles of this historic regiment, formed in 1862 and today based at New Westminster and Chilliwack, B.C., were fought there in 1944. Those of us who joined the tour, which extended from May 20 to June 1, learned some profound lessons about the battles, and



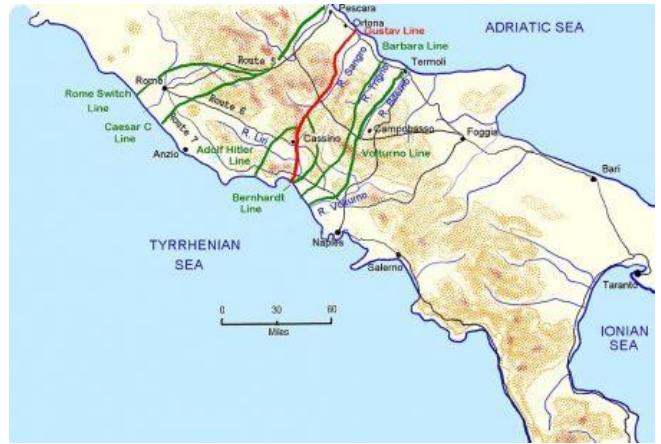
about so much of the best and some of the worst of the war.

By late 1942, the Allies had decided to engage the Nazis on multiple fronts, knowing that if the enemy had to commit resources "everywhere" it would be more difficult for it to defend any one critical position. In keeping with that strategy, the U.S., U.K., and Canada had landed nearly 200,000 troops in Italy in early September 1943. The Westminster Motor Regiment, as it

was then called, was deployed with many others to force the German army to defend the fortified positions it had constructed across Italy. So it was that the "Westies," as the soldiers in the Regiment were called, found themselves in the thick of things as the Allies attempted to breach

the Gustav, Hitler, and Gothic Lines, each one designed to inflict maximum damage on the Allies and slow their advance to Germany.

It was on the site of the first and most southerly of these lines, the Gustav, that we heard about one of the recurring themes of the Canadian Campaign in Italy: uncommon courage under fire. Today, one can still see the remnants of old German pillboxes that formed strongpoints along the line. We identified some key farmhouses standing alone in the former battlefields. They are all abandoned now, but in 1944 they played a crucial role in individual battles. Much of the hard-fought ground has reverted to farmland, though the never-ending drainage ditches, hills and ravines remain as a reminder of just how difficult the fighting conditions must have been.



We were taken back to the time of the fighting with the story of how a Westie, Major Jack Mahony, was awarded the Victoria Cross for his bravery. The famous “VC” is the highest and most prestigious award for “gallantry in the face of the enemy” that can be awarded to British and Commonwealth forces. Working with another Canadian regiment, the Lord Strathcona’s Horse (long a Calgary-based unit), the Canadians were tasked with crossing the Gustav Line at the Melfa River, where the mountainous centre of the Italian “boot” meets the Mediterranean coast southeast of Rome. It was an audacious undertaking. Not only was there a river to cross,



but the German tanks were bigger and better-armed than the Sherman tanks used by our boys, and the positions fortified.

The battle in May 1944 was bloody and the Canadians fought courageously. During the assault Major Mahony was wounded in the head and twice in the legs, but refused to leave the fray until reinforcements arrived, continuously supporting his troops and

directing their actions during the battle. Twenty-three* Westies died in the effort, but the river was crossed, the Gustav Line was breached, and the German army was forced to retreat. It was an important victory for the Allies. This action also cemented a friendship between the Royal Westminster Regiment and the Strathconas that has endured ever since.

Italians in the area have not forgotten the Canadian sacrifices. While we were in the ancient town of Roccaseca, birthplace of St. Thomas Aquinas, the mayor and many residents held formal ceremonies of recognition, renaming a town plaza “The Jack Mahony Square” in honour of what he and other brave Canadians had done to liberate them.

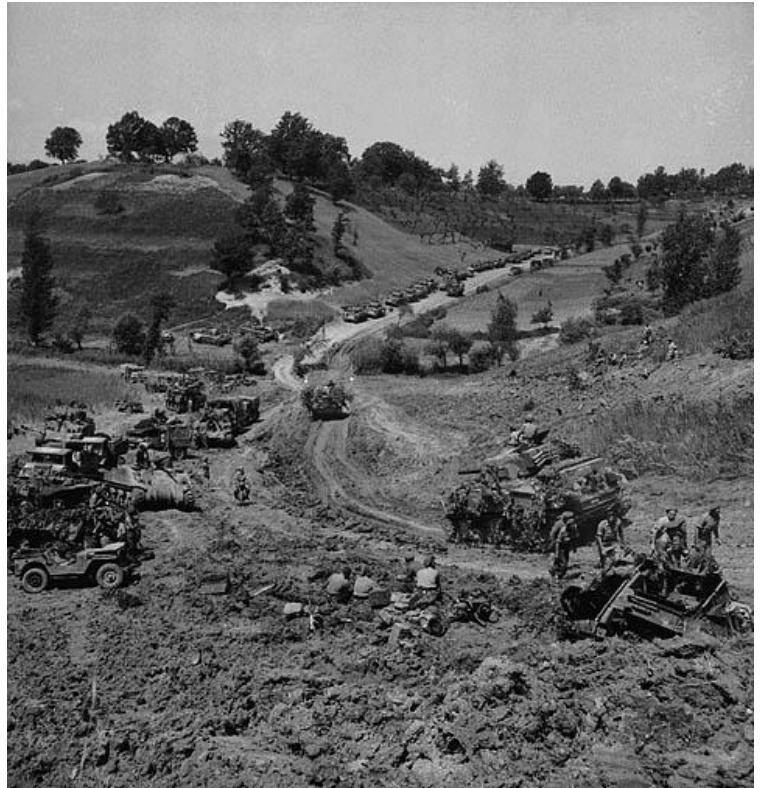
Jack Mahony passed away in 1990, but his daughter, Louise, was there, along with a different group that was one of the eight or nine commemorative tours that visited the area in May and June. Thankfully, Louise was able to attend the ceremonies arranged by our Italian hosts. Listening to the stories of her father was a moving experience, attesting to the resolute and determined fighting spirit of the Canadians. As we did throughout our tour, we visited the graves of the Westies buried nearby, placing a small Canadian flag beside each headstone. The serving soldiers of our Regiment wore their uniforms for the ceremonies, as did the four cadets who accompanied them.



Everywhere we went on the 12-day tour, which I estimate covered about 1,500 km by road, we heard of so much courage, at so high a cost, expended by Canadians to help liberate Italy. It was gratifying to see that none of it has been forgotten. But we soon learned that the Italians remembered more than just the courage of our troops. The humanitarian efforts of the Canadians also stood out.

This struck home at our next stop, the town of Pofi, 35 km farther up the Allies' advance upon Rome. As they did everywhere we went, the locals thanked us and all Canadians for sacrificing so much to give them their freedom. Yet here the emphasis was different. We were stirred by hearing about how the Canadians had helped the Italians themselves. It was a story that also chilled our hearts.

Through an interpreter, an Italian lady told us the story. After the Allies had routed the Germans, serious problems remained. Some members of one of the liberating armies decided to take advantage of the chaotic situation and further traumatized the townsfolk by sexually assaulting many of the local women. Unable to stop it themselves, the villagers asked the Canadians for protection. The Canadians immediately set up patrols. When the marauders refused to stop their attacks, our soldiers did what they had to do: they shouldered arms and shot the perpetrators. They then moved the women to safety in the Canadian sector.



Our Italian hosts remember and continue to appreciate the Canadians' humanitarian work. The local history resonates with it, and efforts are underway in Italy to specifically recognize the suffering of women and children during wars. Canada's Ambassador to Italy, Alexandra

Bugailiskis, attended several commemorative ceremonies. In Pofi, she gave an impassioned speech, reaffirming that what Canadians were prepared to do in the Second World War we are prepared to do again: stand resolutely with those most vulnerable. There are many victims in any armed conflict. But our men in uniform showed it was possible not only to fight and win battles, but to help the shards of civil society collect themselves for the rebuilding ahead.

After Pofi, we moved on to Ortona, infamous for gruesome door-to-door fighting in late 1943. Although the Westminster Regiment wasn't in that particular battle, we got a history lesson there about a particular Christmas dinner that happened amidst the battle.

The Loyal Edmonton Regiment and the Seaforth Highlanders were the Canadian troops fighting in Ortona, and they suffered cruel losses. They had been battling hard, so the Seaforths' quartermaster decided to help keep their spirits by holding a Christmas dinner for as many troops as possible, complete with all the trimmings he could scrape together. There is a famous photo of the men sitting together in a square, enjoying a meal and a couple of hours' respite. We also heard some things that were symbolic of one of war's most difficult tasks: reconciliation.

On the 50th anniversary of that Christmas dinner, veterans got together to once again share a meal in Ortona. A handful of former German soldiers heard about it and asked if they could also attend, to express their sorrow about what had happened during the war and to try to bridge the gap between the two sides. The gesture was probably sincere, but it was a "bridge too far" for some of the veterans who had lost so many friends during the fight. The two groups were in town together but, understandably, they ate in separate rooms. Reconciliation can be difficult.



Even so, a glimmer of what was to come was told in a story of two soldiers – one German and one Canadian – who had attended that event, started to write to one another and eventually became fast friends. When the former German soldier was dying of cancer, his Canadian friend flew to Germany to be by his bedside. Reconciliation is possible.

I thought about this later that day as we toured present-day Ortona. It was rebuilt after the war, but its narrow streets and old churches give the town much the same look as it has had for centuries. As in many of the small towns we visited, it's proving difficult convincing the young people that they shouldn't move to Rome or Milan. Despite the town's historic feel, it is unlikely to replace Tuscany as a tourist Mecca.

Here too, in honour of the battle's 75th anniversary, Ortona is renaming its *piazza*, this time calling it "Canadian Heroes Square." Our tour guide, Angelo, walked us to the bronze statue that was placed there in 1999, depicting a Canadian soldier ministering to a wounded comrade. The statue is called "The Price of Freedom." There were fresh flowers on the pedestal.

Everywhere we went on the 12-day tour we heard of so much courage, at so high a cost, expended by Canadians to help liberate Italy. But we soon learned that the Italians remembered more than just the courage of our troops. The humanitarian efforts of the Canadians also stood out.

"For many years, we were unsure where the flowers came from," said Angelo. "But we finally found out that they were placed there by two sisters who live nearby. These sisters were saved by the Canadians in a remarkable show of courage. During the fighting, the young girls were trapped and isolated on the wrong side of a minefield, but a Canadian soldier was determined to save them. First, he had to chart a path through the mines to get to the girls. Then he went back and forth, delivering the girls to safety on his back so they wouldn't step on any mines. Forever after, the girls – now elderly ladies – have made sure there were flowers placed here in remembrance."

Two other stories stood out. In gratitude for being saved, the sisters began washing the uniforms of Canadian soldiers. But it was a bittersweet chore. Often, a soldier who dropped off his washing never returned to collect it. Other soldiers would go through the neatly folded laundry to give the sisters the news: this soldier will be by later for his uniform; that one will never return.

The final story from Ortona reminded me again of the importance of reconciliation. The statue in the town square was created by a talented Canadian, Rob Surette, an Indigenous artist from Ottawa who sculpted the impressive bronze piece but refused payment for his work.

Many First Nation and Métis men served, fought and gave their lives in the war, but those who returned home were often denied the recognition or benefits given other veterans. It remains an impediment to Canada-Indigenous reconciliation. Yet here was a bronze statue created by an Indigenous artist, depicting one soldier ministering to another, and it is giving Ortona's town square its focal point. It reminds us that reconciliation may indeed be difficult, but is worth the effort at home and abroad.

As we continued to travel the Westminsters' fighting route northeastward across Italy, we heard many wartime stories of Canadian heroism, as well as local suffering. In the village of Colfelice, the local mayor, schoolchildren and residents young and old came together to thank Canadians for what they did 75 years ago. The war exacted an awful price on the locals but, like elsewhere, they heaped praise on Canada's efforts to bring them freedom.

In Villanova, the focus is on something the townspeople consider "a miracle." Like many villagers, these Italians had spent months during the German occupation barely surviving. As the bombing and artillery shelling in the area increased, over 100 locals took refuge in a concrete culvert deep under a railroad embankment. As time went on, things appeared increasingly bleak and hopeless. Eventually, there was nothing more to be done except pray for deliverance.

That's when the "miracle" happened. Some Westies, led by Private (later Sergeant) George Dominick, were patrolling the railroad when they heard crying coming from the culvert area. George investigated and found the crowd of starving and bedraggled Italians. He gave them the "V" for Victory in sign language, and was able to convince them that the Germans had been forced to retreat, that they had been liberated, and that they could return to their homes.

Locals have honoured this liberation by building a chapel near the culvert and holding an annual ceremony of remembrance. Wreaths and flowers are placed there, and the story is being passed down to the next generation. We met and spoke to some elderly folks who described their liberation as children 75 years ago.

The schoolchildren accompanied our soldiers and veterans to each headstone as they placed a flag in remembrance of every Westie killed in action and buried there. Some tears were shed. In that town, the next generation will remember. On one occasion, as our group was walking through town, an elderly lady grabbed me by the sleeve to ask if we were “Canadese?” When I responded yes, she smiled broadly and put her hand to her lips to blow a kiss, softly saying, “Grazie.”

Of the 92,757 Canadians who served in Italy, 26,254 became casualties, of whom 5,900 were fatal. We tried to visit every single one of their graves. Since it was May, the poppies were in full bloom. Sometimes they grew wildly alongside the roads and cemeteries. Sometimes, as in John McRae’s famous First World War poem *In Flanders Fields*, they were on farmland, row on row. Certainly the headstones of fallen Allied soldiers – thousands and thousands of them – were in neat rows, meticulously maintained by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

In Villanova*, our guide was Rosalia, now an elderly woman who has spent a lifetime remembering – and ensuring others remembered – the sacrifice of young Canadians, many of whom lie beneath Italian soil. She told of how her father and uncle were both killed by the Nazis in the days just before Canadians liberated their town. As we walked amongst the Commonwealth graves, Rosalia’s comments reminded us why the Westies continue to cultivate relationships with our Italian friends, even after all these years. She invited us to return whenever we can. In the meantime, she assured us, “We will remember them. We will look after your boys.”

As promised, we *too* will remember them.

- LCol. Chuck Strahl, P.C., Honorary Lieutenant Colonel.

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* *Editor’s Notes:*

The official record is that twenty-one Westminsters died on the 24th and 25th May 1944. It was not at Villanova where George Dominick found the group of Italians hiding in culvert, it was near Colfelice.

SitRep from Jordan

HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN - I deployed at the beginning of July to Canadian Training Assistance Team - Jordan (CTAT-J) as a Combat Service Support (CSS) Mentor for one of three battalions within the Jordanian Armed Forces (JAF) Quick Reaction Force (QRF) Brigade. One battalion is in the north by Irbid, one is by Zarqa (outside of Amman) with the brigade HQ, and one is in the south by Aqaba. Our mandate is to provide CSS mentorship to assist the QRF battalion in efficiently administering and resupplying the deployed forces from the battalion. Along with a Warrant Officer (WO), we comprise one of three teams, and our Officer Commanding (OC) advises and mentors the brigade staff as necessary.

Upon arrival, I started the transition with the outgoing team from Ontario. Our mentor teams consist of a lead mentor, which is the position I am currently employed, and a Quartermaster (CQ) mentor filled by a WO. For the first month of the deployment, I was working alone as there were staffing issues getting a WO for my team. Once he arrived in Jordan, things progressed more smoothly. We are working closely with mentors from the USMC, who are assisting in the training of the rifle company soldiers of the QRF battalions, and our UK Loan Services Officer (LSO) who is a member of the British Army, but embedded deeply in the battalion (to the point he wears a JAF uniform and has language training).

We have conducted CSS training within the bn for members who require knowledge of resupply and administration, usually focussing on SNCOs and Jnr Offr's. For the most part, it appears that the QRF brigade is attempting to transition to more NATO standards of conduct, and therefore have a considerable amount of baseline knowledge in the subjects we discuss with them. As with all nations, there are minor variations, and always room for improvement. Our primary goal is to ensure that the members of the battalion understand why and how they need to replenish forward from a rear area echelon. Some facets of the training present bigger hurdles to get past, as the soldiers cling to what they know, even when fully explained to their satisfaction.

While here, the battalion I work with has moved bases from the Zarqa area to the Irbid area, and did so with only a days' notice from JAF HQ. They were initially planning on moving in the New Year, but another unit required the base they were occupying, and they were forced to move ahead of their schedule. This was in the middle of October, and they have accomplished quite an

amount of improvement. The troops are doing all the minor improvements in small work parties, in between conducting training to maintain readiness. The move to the new base has added two hours of travel time for my team, so we've gone from two hours of travel to four each day. There is talk of moving all the CSS personnel in the Amman area out of the city to reduce travel time, but that will depend on budgets.

The driving in Jordan is truly chaotic! At a moment's notice, a two lane highway will turn into a four lane highway, with people exiting onto off-ramp from centre lanes. Large trucks will pull out into the fast lane of traffic with no warning. Defensive driving is definitely not the order of the day here. It seems aggressive defensive driving is the best action, along with a bit of luck, are the best way to approach the roads here.

Although we are operationally deployed, we still work the schedules of our respective battalions, and they usually have their weekend on Fridays and Saturdays. This has afforded us to see many of the sights of Jordan; Petra, Wadi Mujib, Jerash, Amman Citadel, Dead Sea, Mt Nebo, and the Baptism Site of Jesus, among other local sights within Amman such as the Roman Amphitheatre. I still want to make it to Wadi Rum. The people are very friendly, and helpful, and the food is delicious. We are regularly invited to lunch at battalion on Tuesday afternoon for mansaf, which is a traditional Jordanian dish of rice with lamb, covered in a hot yogurt slurry. You are meant to roll the rice with your hand and eat it that way. It takes a fair amount of skill to roll the soaked rice into a ball for eating, especially when the slurry is burning your hand. I have come away with burnt hands more than once.

I currently have two more months deployed before coming home in mid-January, and I'm looking forward to returning to the unit to see what has changed while I've been away. I will be away over Christmas, and that will be tough, as this is the first deployment I've had over the holiday season. I get to speak with everyone back home often, and it's good to hear their voices. I also send messages back and forth with my friends. The times have changed from my deployment in Croatia in '93 where we only had a weekly 15 minute phone call, at a phone that was a 30 minute drive away. Afghanistan in '08 was better, as I had regular access to email, and phone calls during the week. I currently have a local phone card in my phone, so I have instant communications just like at home.

- *Capt. Curtis Beglaw*

Hill 70 Memorial Dedication

LOOS-EN-GOHELLE, FRANCE - On October 2nd 2019, Rob Harley, myself, and Major Ben Pong attended the dedication of the Hill 70 Memorial in Loos-en-Gohelle. The Memorial commemorates the battle for Hill 70 at Lens, France. It was at this battle that Cpl. Filip Konowal was awarded the VC for his actions. There is also a walkway named for Christopher Lee, a Chinese-Canadian soldier who served with the 47th Bn CEF.

While we were there, we laid a wreath on Konowal Walk in memory of Cpl. Filip Konowal and then walked around the Memorial. We then visited the Villars Station Cemetery where there are 79 members of the 47th Bn that were killed at Hill 70



For the next 6 days Rob, Capt. DeSaulniers, and I visited museums, cemeteries and battlefield sites where we did shrapnel hunting. The Museums that we visited had a lot of artefacts and memorabilia from WW1. These museums included the Somme Trench Museum, the Tommy Café and Trench Museum, the Flanders Field

Museum, and the Hooze Crater Museum.

We also visited the Vimy Ridge Monument and toured the tunnels there, and then on to Ypres and the Menin Gate Memorial where we laid a wreath. Every day we visited one or more Cemeteries where members of the 47th Bn are buried and we placed flags on their graves; about 150 in total.

- Terry Leith



The Hill 70 Memorial Park, dedicated to the Canadian Corps that achieved victory at the Battle of Hill 70 in August, 1917, was completed on October 2nd, 2019. The centerpiece of the Memorial is an obelisk signifying the victory of the Canadian Corps at the Battle of Hill 70. In addition to the obelisk, there is a series of walkways dedicated to the six Victoria Cross awards, as well as plazas dedicated to Regiments and soldiers who figured prominently in the battle.

It was a very interesting and informative trip, although it would have been better if there had been more members of the Regiment at the Hill 70 dedication.

To see more of Hill 70, visit the web link www.hill70.ca

- Terry Leith

Westies Complete International Four Days Marches Nijmegen

NIJMEGEN, THE NETHERLANDS – Members of The Royal Westminster Regiment completed the four day route march in Holland (July 16-19) in the vicinity of Nijmegen, the Netherlands. The world famous annual event has run since 1909, initially as a military skill event, but now involves a majority of civilian walkers. The military portion is an average of 40kms of marching per day, in uniform, with a loaded rucksack.

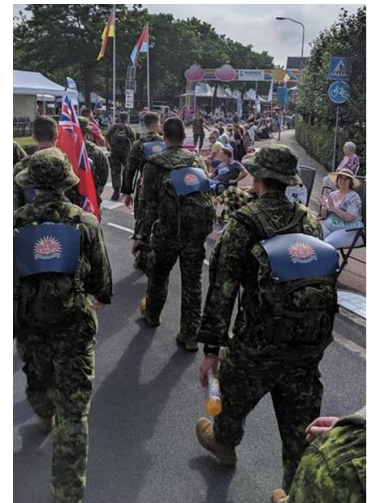


The platoon of Westies have been preparing for months for the event, to build up the endurance and toughen their feet. Along with the distance and load, the heat of the Dutch summer makes this event a challenge for the experienced light infantry soldiers. The marches conclude with a celebration at the finish on Friday that is part of a

weekend festival that runs concurrent to the marches, and a medal is awarded to marchers on behalf of the Dutch sovereign.

The Dutch have a long relationship with Canada and The Royal Westminster Regiment was one of the many Canadian unit involved in the liberation of the Netherlands in 1945. A commemorative plaque presented by the Dutch government is displayed in the regimental armoury in New Westminster. The Dutch people display this gratitude still nearly 75 years later, and the soldiers were touched by the impeccable condition of the war cemeteries maintained by Dutch student volunteers and the kindness of the Dutch spectators and participants at the marches.

- 2Lt. Mulder



Honours and Awards

MWO Henneberry was invested into the Order of Military Merit. MCpl. Cole was awarded his CD. Sgt. Trafananko, MCpl. Haley and Cpl. Munro were presented with their medals for OP REASSURANCE.

Our Cadets

How joining cadets have changed my life and made me a better person with my experiences so far

Cadets has helped make me who I am today. It has increased my confidence and helped me develop important life skills. When my mom first approached me with the idea of joining cadets, I was not very excited, and I had it in my mind that I would not like it. It was something that I never envisioned myself doing. I thought that it would be very difficult, and I would be completely out of my element. I did not know then, how much that I would come to love this program, and I had no idea the level that it would change me, and my life.

My first day, I was very nervous. I took a deep breath and decided to give it a try. It was a sports night and I came in sports attire. I didn't think that I would know anyone and was surprised to see other kids who went to my school. When I decided to allow myself to put myself out there for people to get to know me, I quickly realized that my fellow cadets had already accepted me, as one of them. We spent most of the night running around outside, playing manhunt and doing sports. I even made friends my first night. I felt so welcomed that I continued to go back. I'll admit that for a while, it seemed hard, when I was learning how to march and trying to keep up to other cadets who had been in the program for years. I didn't think that I would ever be as good as them and thought that I would not make it very far. I considered dropping out and even talked to my mom about it. I liked everyone, but it seemed too hard. But I am not a quitter and I didn't give up. Learning new things is always hard, but if you stick with it and you allow yourself to try, you can and will achieve success. The more I went, the more I felt accepted, and the better I felt about myself and my abilities. To my surprise, all my peers had at one point felt the same way, when they started and could relate to me. They were all very understanding and went out of their way to help me, which really helped. Cadets is like a family. I would say that its like a sister and brother-hood. We all protect one another, and we never leave a cadet behind.

Cadets is a lot of fun. We go on a lot of Field Training Exercises (FTX'S) and we are consistently learning new things. We play a lot of games and do a tremendous amount of sports and activities like paintballing, swimming and shooting rifles. We all joke around and have a lot of fun. I also really enjoy going to the cadet summer camp and look forward to returning next year.

This program is more like an extended family, of brothers and sisters. We all depend on and help each other. We have a strict no bullying policy, so I'm constantly surrounded by positive people which makes me feel more positive, as a person. I have seen a change in how I treat people, because of cadets. I value myself more and expect to be treated with more respect. It has also taught me how to better respect and value others and how to help others find the same confidence, in themselves. The cadets that I have personally connected with have become like family. I know that I am around people that I can trust and who will have my back.

Cadets helps you maintain your mental, physical and emotional health. I strongly believe that my athletic abilities have sky rocketed. The running and conditioning are good for my health and over all well being. When it comes to sports, I am more active now and more engaged because of cadets. I never use to be able to more than a few push ups without my arms giving out, but now I can do thirty-five. I wish I could do more, but I know that if I continue to practice and push myself, I can accomplish just that. I used to be afraid of dodgeballs, but now I put my war face on and I'm right in there, hurdling them across the gym. I'm even trying to join more sports teams at school and have taken up an interest in strength training and working out at home.

Cadets helps build friendships, leadership, confidence, and much more. As I continued to go, I noticed many other self-improvements and changes in my life. I push myself a lot more, which in-turn has made me try harder in all aspects of my life, including school. I believe in myself more now than I ever did. I apply myself more and I am very proud of the things I have accomplished. I dream bigger and have larger goals, not only in Cadets but in life. I feel that I can one day be a strong leader. This program is helping shape and mold me one night at a time.

My advice for any new cadet, is do not allow yourself to be intimidated by the program or by any other person. It can seem overwhelming when you start but keep with it. It's just like anything else in life that you would take on and dedicate your time to. Cadets has been nothing but a positive experience for me and I know joining was the right decision. I couldn't imagine ever quitting now and would have regretted it if I did. I would have missed out on so much fun. If I leave, it will only be by aging out. I am very committed to the program and will not stop striving to better myself. So, give cadets a try. Come check it out and I guarantee anyone who joins and sticks with the program will feel the same way.

- *Cdt. Cpl Emily Long, 1922 RWestmrR RCACC*